

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereafter (where underlining “_” denotes additions and strikethrough “-” denotes deletions).

Claims:

1. - 26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method for use in an interactive television system, the interactive television system including a system manager coupled to a plurality of subscriber terminals, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first user input at a subscriber terminal indicating a choice for one of a video signal and first operation data, wherein the first operation data includes a plurality of screens;

generating a screen of first operation data responsive to a command, wherein the screen of operation data is generated by a local screen character generator;

saving a screen of the plurality of screens to memory;

determining whether the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens;

if the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is only accessible through other screens, indicating that the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory; and

displaying at least one of the video signal and the screen of the first operation data according to the user input, wherein the first operation data is stored in at least one of a screen generator coupled to the system manager and subscriber terminal memory.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the plurality of screens includes a feature start screen and associated screens, wherein upon receiving user input indicating the first operation data and displaying the feature start screen, the subscriber terminal retrieves the associated screens from the system manager and stores the associated screens in the subscriber terminal memory prior to their actual use.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, the steps further comprising:
receiving a second user input for one of the associated screens according to a channel map associated with the first operation data;
transmitting the second user input to the system manager;
receiving information from the system manager for updating the associated screen; and
displaying the associated screen including the updated information in accordance with the second user input.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein a user continues, via user inputs, an interactive communication with the system manager through the plurality of screens associated with the first operation data where the system manager updates each of the plurality of screens.

31. (Currently Amended) A local environment for providing interactive communications, the local environment comprising:
a system manager for storing information regarding a plurality of clients, each client associated with a terminal located in the local environment;
a local screen generator for generating a screen of information responsive to receiving a command;
memory for saving the screen of information; and
a plurality of terminals coupled to the system manager, each terminal for receiving at least one of a video signal and first operation data, wherein when the first operation data is chosen, the terminal displays a feature start screen and the video signal and stores a plurality of screens associated with the first operation data;
wherein the system manager is configured to save the screen into memory and to determine whether the screen of information is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens; and

wherein the system manager is further configured to indicate that the screen of information saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory if the screen of information saved into memory is only accessible through other screens.

32. (Previously Presented) The local environment of claim 31, wherein, upon client input, the terminal requests information from the system manager and subsequently displays the received information associated with one of the plurality of screens.

33. (Currently Amended) A method of providing services to a patron of a subscriber of an interactive entertainment system, the method comprising the steps of:

generating at the premises of a subscriber a screen of a menu for selecting services, wherein the screen is one of a plurality of screens included in the menu, and wherein the services for selection are offered by at least one of the group consisting of an interactive entertainment system and a subscriber of the interactive entertainment system;

providing a terminal, the terminal adapted to receiver input from a guest and adapted to provide the screen to a display device;

instructing the terminal to save the screen of the plurality of screens to memory;
determining whether the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens;

if the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is only accessible through other screens, instructing the terminal to indicate that the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory; and

receiving a selection from a guest.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the screen includes charges owed by the guest.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein charges include charges for services offered by the interactive entertainment system.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the subscriber provides room service to guests, and the charges include charges for room services.
37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the screen is a check-out screen that enables the guest to check-out from the premises of the subscriber using the terminal.
38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, further including the steps of:
providing a system manager, the system manager located at the premises of the subscriber and adapted to control billing of the guest; and
transmitting the screen downstream through a local area network to the terminal.
39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the screen is generated at the terminal.
40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, further including the steps of:
associating a given screen of the menu with a given television channel; and
outputting the given screen from the terminal such that the screen is displayable on a television tuned to the given television channel.
41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the screen is for room-service.
42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the screen is a for in-room checkout.
43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the screen is for providing information about services offered by the subscriber.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the given screen is a first screen in a sequence of screens for a service, and further including the steps of:

- providing in the given screen instructions for the guest; and
- receiving input from the guest;
- responsive to receiving the input from the guest, determining whether a second screen in the sequence of screens is stored in the terminal;
- responsive to determining the second screen is not stored in the terminal, requesting the second screen from a system manager that is located in the premises of the subscriber;
- responsive to requesting the second screen, receiving the second screen from the system manager; and
- outputting the second screen from the terminal such that the second screen is displayable on a television.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, further including the step of:

- responsive to determining the second screen is not stored in the terminal, prefetching a third screen from the system manager, wherein the third screen is one of the screens in the sequence of screens.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, further including the steps of:

- receiving a video signal;
- outputting the video signal such that the video signal is displayable on a television;
- outputting the screen such that the screen is displayable on a television, wherein the screen appears superimposed upon the image created by the video signal.

47. (Currently Amended) A system for providing services to guests of a subscriber of an interactive entertainment system, the system comprising:

means for receiving content provided by the interactive entertainment system;

means for distributing the received content to terminals located at the premises of the subscriber;

means for generating screens of a menu for selecting services, wherein the menu includes a plurality of screens, and the services offered in the menu include services of the interactive entertainment system and services of the subscriber, wherein the screen generating means is located at the premises of the subscriber; and

means for instructing the screen generating means to save a screen of the plurality of screens to memory;

means for determining whether the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens;

means for instructing the terminal such that, if the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is only accessible through other screens, the terminal indicates that the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory;

means for receiving a request for a service by a guest; and

means for managing the system, the managing means including means for billing the guest for selected services.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the request receiving means is a terminal, the terminal including the screen generator means.

49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, wherein responsive to receiving the request from the guest, the screen generator means generates a screen of the menu using data stored in a memory of the terminal, the terminal outputs the screen such that the screen is displayable on a television.

50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, wherein responsive to receiving the request from the guest, the terminal determines whether the memory includes data for the screen, and responsive to determining the memory does not include the data, the terminal sends a screen request to the system manager.

51. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the screen generator means generates a room-service screen that enables the guest to order room-service from the subscriber.

52. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the screen generator means generates a room check-out screen that enables the guest to check-out from the premises of the subscriber.

53. (Currently Amended) A method of providing services to guests of a subscriber of an interactive entertainment system, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of two-way terminals;

generating at the premises of a subscriber a screen for display on a television, wherein the screen relates to information about services provided by the subscriber of the interactive entertainment system;

saving the screen to memory on one of the plurality of two-way terminals;

determining whether the screen saved into memory is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens;

if the screen saved into memory is only accessible through other screens, indicating that the screen of the plurality of screens saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory; and

receiving a selection from a guest.

54. (Currently Amended) A system for providing services to guests of a subscriber of an interactive entertainment system, the system comprising:

means for receiving content provided by the interactive entertainment system;

means for distributing the received content to terminals located at the premises of the subscriber;

means for generating screens of information related to services provided by the subscriber of the interactive entertainment system;

means for saving the screens to memory on a terminal located at the premises of a subscriber;

means for determining whether the screen saved into memory is directly accessible or accessible only through other screens;

means for indicating that, if the screen saved into memory is only accessible through other screens, the screen saved into memory is not to be deleted from memory;
and

means for receiving a request for a service by a guest.